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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 SANTO DOMINGO 006906

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR S/CT (REAP) AND WHA/CAR (MCISAAC)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: 2003 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF: STATE 301352

¶1. Summary. There were no terrorist attacks or known terrorism related activities in the GODR during calendar year 2003. The GODR continues to work closely with the USG in the fight on global terrorism. End Summary.

¶2. Embassy Santo Domingo submits the following responses keyed to reftel requests.

A) Significant actions taken by the host governments to support the global coalition against terrorism, particularly law enforcement actions taken against Al-Qaida operatives, but including diplomatic efforts and actions to block terrorist assets, enact new counterterrorism laws, and ratify existing treaties.

-- The GODR's most significant support to the global coalition against terrorism came with the deployment of Dominican troops to Iraq. As a member of the coalition of the willing, the GODR sent 302 soldiers to Iraq in August as a part of a Spanish led brigade. The GODR has made a one year commitment to keeping its troops in Iraq. The Dominican soldiers currently in Iraq are scheduled to return to the Dominican Republic in February and be replaced by a similar number of troops for the remainder of the one year commitment.

-- In hosting the 14th Pan American Games, the GODR gained first hand knowledge of counterterrorism methods employed to secure venues susceptible to international terrorist attacks. This heightened the level of awareness of the threat of international terrorism to both the Dominican government and the Dominican people.

-- No Al-Qaida operatives have been located within the Dominican Republic; therefore, no domestic law enforcement actions have been taken against them. The GODR cooperated fully with Embassy Santo Domingo while arresting and deporting an individual believed to have ties to international terrorism.

-- The GODR has fully cooperated with US and UN requests to search their banks for assets held under the names of known terrorists. No accounts of this type have been found. The Superintendent of Banks has been cooperative in heading the GODR's effort to ensure that banks searches are conducted in a timely manner.

-- The GODR has not enacted comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation. The GODR Armed Forces are in the process of developing a draft counterterrorism bill. The bill is expected to be introduced to the Senate or Chamber of Deputies in 2004.

B) Describe the response of the judicial system of each country to acts of international terrorism and/or significant acts of domestic terrorism during 2003, including any host government prosecutions relating to terrorism. Particular attention should be given to host government actions regarding acts of terrorism against or affecting U.S. citizens or facilities.

-- There are no pending cases relating to terrorism in the judicial system in the Dominican Republic, nor have there been any terrorism related prosecutions during 2003.

C) Did the host government extradite or request the extradition of suspected terrorists for prosecution during the year? Particular attention should be given to host government responses to U.S. requests for extradition or assistance in terrorist cases.

-- The GODR did not extradite nor request the extradition of any suspected terrorists during CY03. In general, the USG and GODR have very good relations on extradition matters. So far this year, the GODR has extradited eight fugitives to the US. The US has returned one fugitive to the Dominican Republic. The GODR has worked with the USG to build cells to hold 45 prisoners awaiting extradition. Additionally, the GODR has promised to increase resources in its extradition unit within the Attorney General's office.

D) Describe any significant impediments to host government prosecution and/or extradition of suspected terrorists.

-- There is no comprehensive anti-terrorism law in the Dominican Republic. Any prosecution would have to take place under existing criminal statutes. The existing criminal code is fairly comprehensive and includes statutes covering many terrorism-related crimes such as money laundering, crimes against persons, crimes against property, homicide (all degrees), and human rights abuses. The judicial system will formally adopt a new criminal procedure code in January 2004.

Some portions of the code have gone into effect this year. The new procedural code moves the GODR away from a strict Napoleonic Code-based criminal procedural system, towards an accusatory system.

-- The 1909 extradition treaty between the USG and the GODR does not list "terrorism" as an extraditable crime. Nevertheless, the treaty contains a comprehensive list of crimes under which a request for extradition could be made. Additionally, the GODR has honored extradition requests for crimes not specifically enumerated in the treaty. For instance, fugitives accused of certain drug related crimes have been extradited under the authority of other international treaties to which both countries are parties.

-- The USG and the GODR have a high level of cooperation on extradition matters.

E) Discuss host government responses other than prosecution. These would include, but are not limited to, public statements by government officials or official news agencies following a terrorist incident (in or outside the country) and efforts by host government to investigate terrorist incidents or to assist with international terrorism investigations.

-- The GODR willingly assists USG agencies in international terrorism investigations and international law enforcement matters in general. Hosting the 14th Pan American Games this year provided a unique opportunity for the GODR to raise the country's level of awareness to the possibility of international terrorism. GODR security force members, both military and police, were quoted as saying the GODR was prepared for potential terrorist attacks on its soil. (See paragraph F, below)

F) Describe major counterterrorism efforts undertaken in 2003 by the host government, including steps taken in international fora.

-- The GODR's troops currently stationed in Iraq received counterterrorism training prior to deployment. A second group of soldiers, scheduled to be deployed in February 2004, will begin their counterterrorism training in 2003 and finish it in 2004. These sessions are the first counterterrorism training received by any GODR military or police troops.

-- Embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) sponsored a number of training programs with counterterrorism components. A group of airport security officers went to Miami to receive dogs and canine handlers training. The training focused on the detection of explosive devices. This unit is now operating at Las Americas airport in the Dominican Republic. Additionally, NAS, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, sponsored two money laundering workshops for prosecutors and law enforcement officers.

-- A small number of military and police officers received counterterrorism training and guidance from the USG and Israel, prior to the opening of the 14th Pan Am Games in Santo Domingo. The Pan Am Games brought more than 1600 athletes, trainers and support personnel from western hemisphere countries to participate in an Olympic style competition over two weeks. The GODR stated it was in a position to handle an international terrorist attack, but security throughout the games showed numerous deficiencies. Military forces with security responsibilities were not appropriately trained or equipped. Access controls to athletic event venues were lax and the physical design and structures for the venues failed to provide adequate security controls. There were no serious security breaches or attacks during the games.

G) Describe any significant host government support for international terrorism, terrorists, or terrorist groups, including (but not limited to) political and financial support or terrorists or their activities; diplomatic support through diplomatic recognition; misuse of the diplomatic pouch and other diplomatic privileges to support terrorism; provision of sanctuary and/or the presence of offices or terrorist groups; provision of training or training sites; provision of weapons; and positions taken on terrorism issues in international fora.

-- The GODR has not shown any support for international terrorism, terrorists or terrorist groups. The widespread acceptance of bribes or favors by officials and security forces could leave the Dominican Republic susceptible to

exploitation by terrorist organizations. Relatively high level government officials and at least one prominent congressional representative have been implicated in alien smuggling operations and have been tied to other illicit activities. Embassy Santo Domingo is vigilant in efforts to detect and report individuals of responsibility engaged in suspicious activities.

H) Has the host government made any public statements in support of a terrorist-supporting country on a terrorism issue? (The seven governments designated as state sponsors of terrorism are Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Syria, and Sudan. Please note that, although Iraq remains a designated state sponsor, all applicable sanctions have been suspended.)

-- The GODR has not made any public statements in support of a terrorist-supporting country on a terrorism issue.

I) Describe any significant change since 2002, positive or negative, in the host government's attitude toward terrorism, international or domestic. What is responsible for the change?

-- Overall there has been a positive change in the GODR's attitude toward combating terrorism during 2003. The government has engaged with the deployment of troops to Iraq and with its hosting of the Pan Am Games, gaining a better understanding of terrorist threats in both international and domestic arenas. GODR and USG officials have further improved screening and reviewing suspect third country nationals in the Dominican Republic. The Foreign Ministry has worked with Embassy's Consular Fraud Prevention Unit in reviewing suspect visa applications and detecting fraud.

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